IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A material stacker, comprising:

a frame;

a plurality of stacking arms arranged along the frame in complementary pairs;

~~a first electrically-controlled positioner~~ a plurality of independent, electrically-controlled horizontal positioners configured to position ~~one or more of~~ the stacking arms in a horizontal relationship with respect to the frame;

~~a second~~ an electrically-controlled vertical positioner, separate from the ~~first electrically-controlled positioner~~ horizontal positioners, said ~~second electrically-controlled~~ vertical positioner configured to position one or more of the stacking arms in a vertical relationship with respect to the frame; ~~and~~

an electronic control system configured to control the operation of the stacker using the ~~first and second~~ electrically-controlled positioners.

2. (Currently Amended) A material stacker, comprising:

a frame;

a plurality of stacking arms arranged along the frame in complementary pairs;

a first electrically-controlled positioner configured to position one or more of the stacking arms in a horizontal relationship with respect to the frame;

a second electrically-controlled positioner, separate from the first electrically-controlled positioner, said second electrically-controlled positioner configured to position one or more of the stacking arms in a vertical relationship with respect to the frame;

an electronic control system configured to control the operation of the stacker using the first and second electrically-controlled positioners; and

~~A stacker according to claim 1, further comprising~~ a hard-coupled mechanical system arranged between stacking arm pairs to generate complementary horizontal movement of the stacking arms, wherein a single electrically-controlled positioner is used to position all of the stacking arms in a horizontal relationship with respect to the frame.

3. (Original) A stacker according to claim 2, wherein the hard-coupled mechanical system is a rack and pinion system.

4. (Previously Amended) A stacker according to claim 1, wherein one horizontal positioner is configured to control the horizontal movement and positioning of all of the stacking arms in a first set of stacking arms, and wherein a second horizontal positioner is configured to control the horizontal movement and positioning of all of the stacking arms in a second, complementary set of stacking arms.

5. (Cancelled).

6. (Currently Amended) A material stacker, comprising:

a frame;

a plurality of stacking arms arranged along the frame in complementary pairs;

a first electrically-controlled positioner configured to position one or more of the stacking arms in a horizontal relationship with respect to the frame;

a second electrically-controlled positioner, separate from the first electrically-controlled positioner, said second electrically-controlled positioner configured to position one or more of the stacking arms in a vertical relationship with respect to the frame; and

an electronic control system configured to control the operation of the stacker using the first and second electrically-controlled positioners~~A stacker according to claim 1~~, wherein the electronic control system is configured to control the speed, position, and ramping of the stacker arms by sending separate signals to the first and second positioners.

7. (Currently Amended) A material ~~lumber~~ stacker according to claim 6, further comprising:

~~a plurality of stacker arms configured to be operated to stack lumber into packages;~~ ~~and~~

a disengagement system configured to readily physically disengage extra stacker arms from stacker arms being used to assemble a lumber package.

8. (Original) A stacker according to claim 7, wherein the disengagement system comprises a mechanical assembly for selectively engaging and disengaging a mechanical communication between the stacker arms to be operated and the extra stacker arms.

9. (Original) A stacker according to claim 8, wherein the mechanical assembly comprises a clutching mechanism.

10. (Previously Presented) An electronically-controlled material stacker, comprising:

an electronically-controlled horizontal positioning device configured to control horizontal movement of a first set of stacking arms arranged to operate complementary to a second set of stacking arms; and

an electronic control system arranged in electrical communication with the horizontal positioning device and configured to vary the speed, acceleration, and positioning of the horizontal positioning device while operating to load material into the stacker.

11. (Previously Presented) A stacker according to claim 10, further comprising an electronically-controlled vertical positioning device, separate from the horizontal positioning device, configured to control a vertical position of one or more of the stacking arms.

12. (Previously Presented) A stacker according to claim 10, wherein the horizontal positioning device also controls horizontal movement of the second set of stacking arms through a hard-coupled mechanical system.

13. (Previously Presented) A stacker according to claim 10, wherein the horizontal positioning device increases the speed of the stacking arms in a reverse direction.

14. (Previously Presented) A stacker according to claim 11, wherein the electronic control system comprises a PC or PLC device comprising software configured to control the speed, acceleration, and positioning of the positioning devices based on a position of the stacker arms.

15. (Previously Presented) A method of stacking material in a stacking device, comprising:

electronically varying the speed, acceleration, and positioning of one or more positioning devices to control a horizontal movement of stacking arms arranged in complementary-operating stacking arm pairs; and

electronically controlling the speed and positioning of one or more separate positioning devices to control the vertical movement of the stacking arms.

16. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 15, wherein controlling the horizontal movement of the stacking arms comprises increasing the speed of the stacking arms while traveling in a reverse direction.

17. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 15, further comprising using a plurality of horizontal positioning devices to vary the speed, acceleration, and positioning of a plurality of stacking arms, and varying the speed of stacking arms moving in an opposite direction to complementary-operated stacking arms.

18. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 15, wherein controlling the vertical movement of the stacking arm comprises using the separate positioning device to drive a vertical lift arm communicating with the stacking arm.

19. (Original) A method according to claim 15, further comprising automatically increasing and decreasing the speed of the stacking arms during the course of their travel to increase a stacking rate of the stacking device while reducing the risk of tossing the material to be stacked.

20. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 17, further comprising electronically tracking the horizontal position of the stacking arms during their forward and rearward travel, and adjusting a velocity and a vertical position of each of the stacking arms in relation to their position of travel by electronically profiling the motion of each stacking arm using a similar electronic pattern.